# Spark Gap

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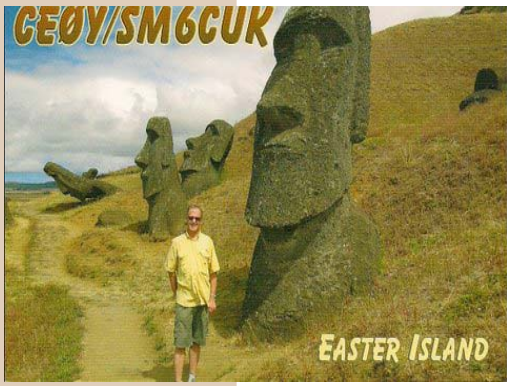
## QSL Cards - An Update




From the President:

We have had quite a number of license upgrades of club members over the past year or so, and hopefully there will be many more. With an upgrade from Technician to General or Extra class comes the privilege of expanded HF frequency allocations. One of the very first things that evolve from HF operation is the art of QSLing. I will attempt to review the basics of this time-hallowed tradition that goes back to the very origin of amateur radio.

QSL is the international "Q" signal for "Can you acknowledge receipt?" Therefore, a QSL card is a written acknowledgement of a communication, or QSO. It lists the date, time, frequency, mode, and signal report for a two way contact. A QSL is a ham's calling card, and designing one that is colorful, or reflects one's personality or originality is a source of pride. The first QSL card is reported to have been used in 1916, and standardized in 1919.

I really enjoy receiving and collecting QSL cards, and I have accumulated several boxes of them over the years. Back in the day (pre-1970's) nearly everyone sent QSL cards to confirm a new contact, whether local or DX. It was "the final courtesy of a QSO". In those days it only cost 4 or 5 cents to mail a card. It was rare that someone would not reciprocate with one of their own. Now that mail costs have increased substantially, it has brought the end to most "automatic" QSLing. These days most hams will only send a card (and request one in return) for award purposes, such as the Worked All States (WAS) award, or DX Century Club award (DXCC) for contacts with 100 "DXCC entities". These are the awards most commonly sought initially by new HF operators, but there are many more that require confirmation of a QSO. Many hams still "QSL 100%" when a card is received but sadly many do not, probably due to increased costs for printing and postage. It is now the norm to send a card plus a S.A.S.E. if you want a card in return. This is especially true for foreign stations, which usually ask for an addressed envelope and one or two "green stamps" (U.S. dollar bills).

Unless you desperately need a foreign card, it is best to use the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service. It is very reasonable, and their incoming bureau is free, you just keep your own S.A.S.E. on file with them for cards you expect to receive via the bureau. Read the details for both the outgoing and incoming QSL service on the ARRL web site.

The ARRL bureau is a great service, but unfortunately a foreign DX card sent and returned through the bureau can take years. Fortunately, a more efficient, and free alternative is the ARRL Logbook of the World (LOTW), which is an electronic, paperless QSL service. Personally I like the real thing, so I use a combination of direct, bureau and LOTW. I choose the method based on need, speed, cost, and desperation. Sometimes life is just too short to wait forever for the latest "rare one" to arrive in the mailbox. Steve K9DY, President

*The Official Newsletter of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club*

MARC

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club
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# ARRL Update

### FCC PROPOSES ADDITIONS, CHANGES TO AMATEUR 5 MHZ ALLOCATION

ARRL News: 05/08/2010

Acting on a , the FCC has issued a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* (*NPRM*), to modify the rules that govern amateurs' secondary use of five channels in the 5 MHz frequency range known as 60 meters. The proposed changes would substitute a new channel for one that is seldom available because of occupancy by the fixed service, which is primary in this range. Also proposed is an increase in power from 50 to 100 W effective radiated power (ERP) and the addition of CW, PSK31 and PACTOR-III modes with provisions to ensure that such operations would be compatible with the primary service. The proposed changes can be found beginning on page 8 of the *NPRM*.

"The ARRL is pleased that the Commission has opened this proceeding to increase the usefulness of the limited 5 MHz Amateur Service allocation," said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ. "We are gratified that the Commission and the NTIA agree that the responsible manner in which amateurs have been using the five USB channels warrants some expansion of privileges so that the Amateur Service can be even better prepared for service to the public."

### FCC FORUM AT DAYTON HAMVENTION TO FEATURE FCC EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS EXPERT

ARRL News: 05/13/2010

The annual FCC forum at the 2010 Dayton Hamvention is scheduled for Saturday, May 15 9:15-10:15 AM in Forum Room 3 at the Hara Arena. Moderating again for 2010 will be Bill Cross, W3TN, of the FCC's Mobility Division. Cross's portfolio of responsibilities includes the Amateur Radio Service rules. Also speaking at this year's forum will be Curt Bartholomew, N3GQ, of the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau.

# ARRL Update

### ARRL ATLANTIC DIVISION TO HOST FIELD DAY WEBINAR

ARRL News: 05/11/2010

The ARRL is pleased to welcome Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Mike Corey, W5MPC, to the Headquarters staff in Newington. Corey's major responsibilities include addressing the development and implementation of an organizational disaster response plan as well as an operational continuity plan, complete with supporting procedures and training. Corey also will play an integral part in the management of ®, and in future negotiations with served agencies with whom ARRL shares or creates .

An Extra class licensee and an ARRL Life Member, Corey comes to the ARRL with almost 20 years of experience with emergency communications. Licensed since 1988, he has been involved with since 1991 and has attended basic and advanced SKYWARN training. He is the author of the ARRL Storm Spotter's Handbook, which was released last month.

After graduating from Indiana University, Corey embarked on a career in law enforcement, working as the Communications Officer for the Howard County Sherriff's Department, where he was responsible for dispatching law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire services and county resources to calls for service, as well as operating and maintaining the logs for the National Crime Information Center. Corey also served a Project Manager for contingency planning for public safety communications.

Corey left Indiana to pursue a Master's degree in Criminal Justice at the University of Mississippi. While attending to his studies, he joined the University of Mississippi Police Department as the Communications Officer. Corey served as the primary contact for the department, provided support training to new employees, coordinated public safety communications during campus events and advised the University administration on severe weather response.

# IRCC Update

**IRCC ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR 2009 TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE AWARD**

Nominations are being accepted for the 2009 IRCC Technical Excellence Award. Each year the Indiana Radio Club Council selects an outstanding Indiana Amateur Radio Operator who has used their technical expertise to advance amateur radio in their club and community. This individual is not required to be a member of an organized club or organization. We are seeking to acknowledge individuals who have generously given their time and technical expertise to the Amateur Radio community.

Nomination requirements:

- Submit as much detail about this person as possible.
- List the Amateur's call sign, email address and telephone number .
- List your name, call sign and email information

Deadline for nominations is midnight June 13, 2009. The 2009 IRCC Technical Excellence Award will be presented during the Indianapolis Communications & Technology Expo July 11th. Submit nominations to : Dennis Gilbey K9JZZ, IRCC Vice Chairman, denisemoe1@aol.com

# VEC Testing

Our Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) team is ARRL accredited, and capable of administering any amateur radio test. As a public service, the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club sponsors test sessions after all but one of its monthly meetings. (September testing is done prior to the picnic.) Meetings begin at 8:00 AM with testing following the meeting (begins about 9:30 AM until 11:00 AM). We would love to have you join us for the meeting. Please check out our website at www.midstatehams.org for directions.

# Hamfest/Event Info

The **South Bend Hamfest**, sponsored by the Michiana Amateur Radio Club, will be held Sunday, May 23 at the Elks Club, 3535 East McKinley Avenue, South Bend, Indiana. Talk-in will be on the 147.33+ (PL 131.8) repeater. For more information, contact Jack Styles N9TAG via email at stylesjack1@hotmail.com.

The **White River Township 18th Annual Strawberry Festival** will be held on Friday, June 11 and Saturday, June 12, 2010 at the Sugar Grove Elementary School located at 4135 W. Smith Valley Road, Greenwood, Indiana. For more information go to http://www.wrtfd.org/festival.htm. MARC will be looking for volunteers for this event. To volunteer, contact Jack Parker W8ISH.

The 40th Annual Indianapolis Communications and Technology Expo (Hamfest) will be held on Saturday, July 10, 2010 at Camp Sertoma, US52 and German Church Road, Indianapolis, Indiana. Gates open at 6 AM. Advance tickets are available at several locations for $6. Tickets at the gate will be $8.00. Children under 12 are admitted free. Several technical meetings will be held and a combined MARS meeting will also take place. This hamfest is Indiana's largest outdoor fleamarket. For more information go to www.Indyhamfest.com

# SKYWARN

Linda, KC9GCH, has created a SKYWARN net checklist to track watches, warnings net conditions, participating stations and weather reports. Anyone wanting a copy should e-mail her at PIO@midstatehams.org and she will forward a copy to you. The form is in a pdf format that can be printed.

***WA9RDF Repeater 146.835/ 146.235 MHz 151.4 Hz PL Tone***

***<u>Weekly Net</u> Every Sunday at 7PM ET***

***Tune in to hear the ARRL Newsline!***

*The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club sponsers a weekly traffic and social net on our repeater. The net begins at 7:00 p.m. local time, and features local news, announcements, and NTS traffic, as well as rebroadcasts of Amateur Radio Newsline. This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills.*

# 2010 Schedule of Events

**MAY 2010**

**1-2** **Indiana QSO Party**
Go to http://www.hdxcc.org/inqp/ for more information

**8** **Indianapolis Mini-Marathon**
Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, at Indyhams.org to volunteer or for more information

**14-15** **Dayton Hamvention, Dayton, OH**

**15** **MARC Meeting - 8:00 AM, Franklin, IN**
Located at the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN. VEC Testing after the meeting (approx. 9:30 am to 11:00 am)

**22** **Geist Half-Marathon, Indianapolis, IN**
Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, at Indyhams.org to volunteer or for more information

**23** **South Bend Hamfest, South Bend, IN**
Elks Club, 3535 E. McKinley Avenue, South Bend, IN

**29** **500 Festival Parade, Indianapolis, IN**
Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, at Indyhams.org to volunteer or for more information

**31** **Memorial Day**

**JUNE 2010**

**11-12** **White River Township Fire Department Strawberry Festival**
Sugar Grove Elementary School, 4135 W. Smith Valley Road, Greenwood, IN

**12** **Tour-de-Cure, Indianapolis, IN**
Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, at Indyhams.org to volunteer or for more information

**12-13** **Indianapolis Air Show, Indianapolis, IN**
Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, at Indyhams.org to volunteer or for more information

**19** **MARC Meeting - 8:00 AM, Franklin, IN**
Located at the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN. VEC Testing after the meeting (approx. 9:30 am to 11:00 am)

**26-27** **ARRL Field Day Event at Home of Steve Brown, N9LC**
The Field Day site is located on Muxferry Road at CR 350 south, Franklin, IN

**JULY 2010**

**10** **40th Annual Indianapolis Hamfest, Indianapolis, IN**
Camp Sertoma, US 52 & German Church Road, Indianapolis, IN

**17** **MARC Meeting - 8:00 AM, Franklin, IN**
Located at the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN. VEC Testing after the meeting (approx. 9:30 am to 11:00 am)

**Mid-State Amateur Radio Club**

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131.

**See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.**

Mid-State Amateur
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